

PARAMOUNT - On Monday, August 21st, Congresswoman Linda Sánchez welcomed seniors to her 2006 Senior Health and Information Fair at the Paramount Park Community Center. Approximately 500 seniors from across the 39th district attended the fair where they were given free health screenings, a variety of information from local senior organizations, and information on the controversial new Medicare prescription drug program.

"I organize the annual Senior Health and Information Fair to make sure that seniors in our communities have access to information and services that can keep them safe and healthy," said Congresswoman Linda Sánchez.

Forty local organizations were on hand to provide seniors with information on fraud prevention, affordable housing opportunities, public transportation, and financial planning. Congresswoman Sánchez also addressed those in attendance by giving an update on legislation in Congress that affects them directly and spoke with many seniors personally. Many local senior centers from Artesia, Hawaiian Gardens, Los Nietos, Lynwood, Paramount, and Whittier provided free transportation for seniors to attend the fair.

Given the mounting problems with the controversial new Medicare prescription drug program, known as Medicare Part D, seniors were also able to troubleshoot their problems with experts from the Center for Health Care Rights. Approximately 7 million Americans will fall into the program's "donut hole," a gap in coverage for those seniors whose annual prescription drug bills are between \$2,250 and \$5,100, according to a recent report by the non-profit Campaign for America's Future. A recent GAO study found that the call centers run by the Medicare Part D drug plans provide inaccurate and incomplete information most of the time.

"This year, it is especially important to help seniors manage the serious problems with Medicare Part D, including coverage gaps and poor customer information service," added Congresswoman Sánchez. "Seniors should not have to worry about their prescription drugs due to a poorly designed program."

"I am thrilled with the success of this year's Senior Fair," concluded Congresswoman Sánchez. "I am especially thankful to the participating organizations for helping make this year's fair possible. Many seniors who needed assistance with everything from Social Security to veterans' benefits got the help they needed. I encourage any senior who needs further assistance to contact my office at 562-429-8499," said Congresswoman Sánchez.